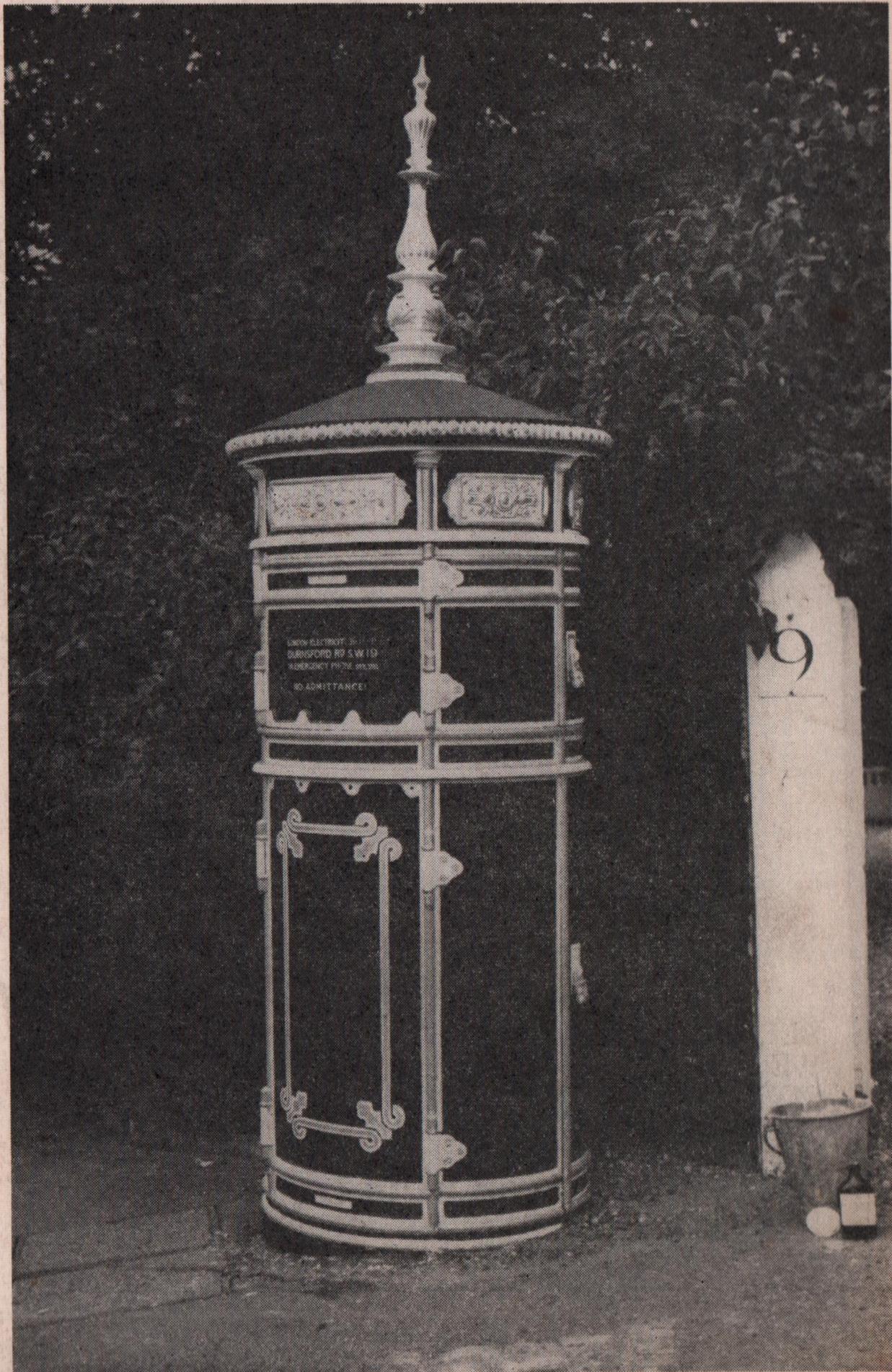


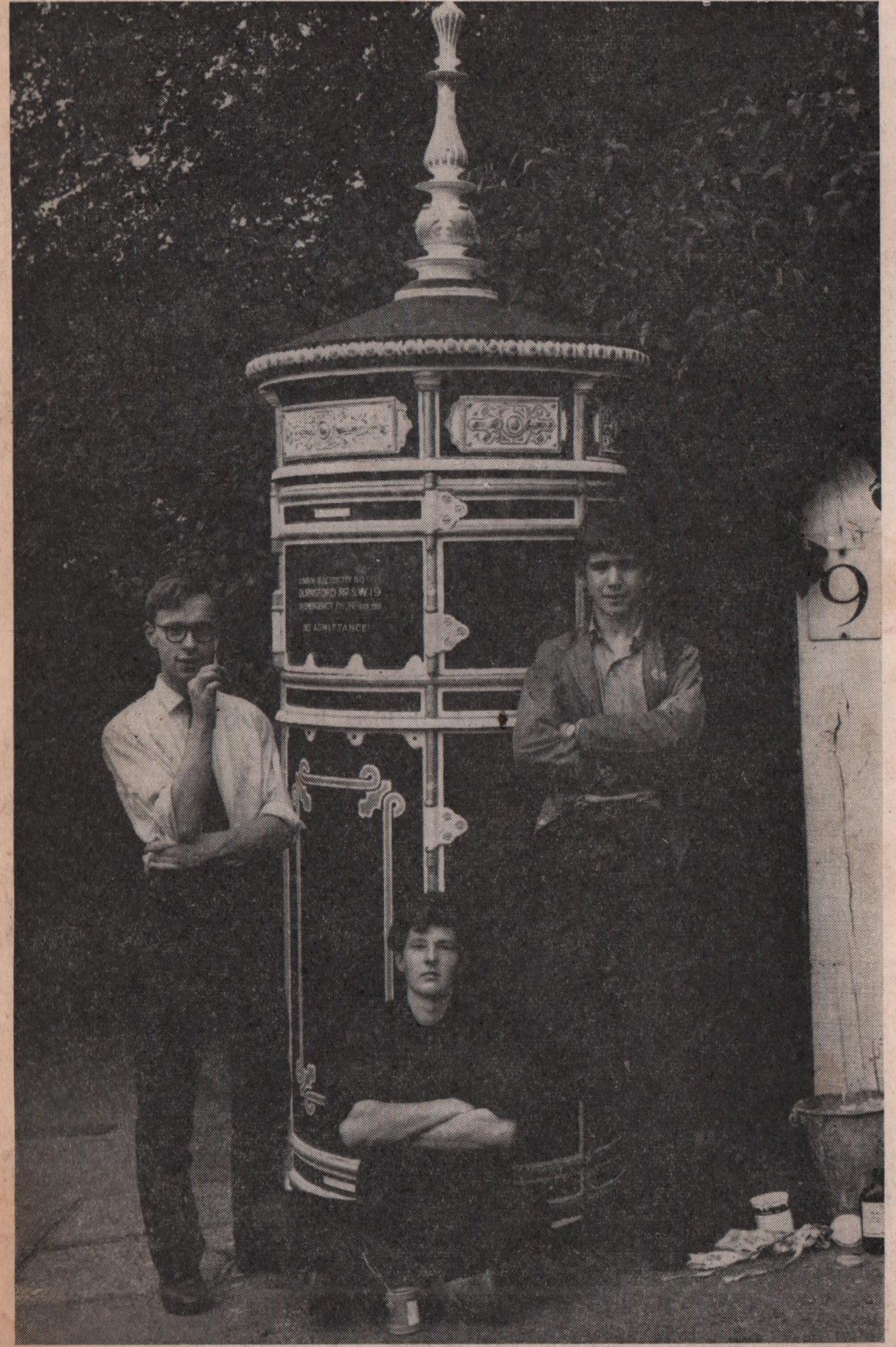
ANARCHY 61

CREATIVE VANDALISM FOR 2 SHILLINGS OR 30 CENTS



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CREATIVE VANDALISM FOR 2 SHILLINGS OR 30 CENTS



T Julian Hall
March 1966

Notes on vandalism	John Ellerby	65
Creative vandalism: a case history	Lewis Woudhuysen	75
The principle of creative vandalism	Martin Small	77
Observations on the white problem	J. R. Mitchell, David Rose, Albert Meltzer	79
Peter Simple and the democratic fallacy	Anthony Idkins	81
Anarchism and crime: a reply	Tony Gibson	85
On the intellectual inhibition of explosive grief and anger	Paul Goodman	87
Cover by Rufus Segar, photos by Lewis Woudhuysen		

Other issues of ANARCHY

VOLUME 1, 1961: 1. Sex-and-Violence. Galbraith*; 2. Worker's control†; 3. What does anarchism mean today?; 4. Deinstitutionalisation; 5. Spain 1936†; 6. Cinema†; 7. Adventure playgrounds†; 8. Anthropology; 9. Prison; 10. MacInnes. Industrial decentralisation.

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VOLUME 4, 1964: 35. House and home; 36. Arms of the law; 37. Why I won't vote; 38. Nottingham; 39. Homer Lane; 40. Unions and workers' control; 41. The land; 42. Indian anarchism; 43. Parents and teachers; 44. Transport; 45. Anarchism and Greek thought; 46. Anarchism and the historians.

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Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and eternally creative source of all life. The urge to destroy is also a creative urge.

—MICHAEL BAKUNIN: *Reaction in Germany* (1842)

No wonder then that some of our troubled children constantly break out of their play into some damaging activity in which they seem to us to "interfere" with our world; while analysis reveals that they only wish to demonstrate their right to find an identity in it. They refuse to become a speciality called "child" who must play at being big because he is not given an opportunity to be a small partner in a big world.

—ERIK ERIKSON: *Childhood and Society* (1965)

Notes on Vandalism

JOHN ELLERBY

EVERYONE WHO HAS HEARD of the nineteenth-century anarchist Michael Bakunin, has heard of his famous declaration of faith that the urge to destroy is also a creative urge. Is this a great truth or a dangerous fallacy? Is destruction always negative and construction always creative? Is there in fact a contradiction, deeper than the merely linguistic one, in the title "creative vandalism" which we have chosen for this issue of ANARCHY? Could we resolve it by saying that, just as it might be said that violence is an imperfect form of non-violence, so vandalism is an imperfect form of creativity? The argument would not carry much weight in a courtroom, but it is not in the courts, nor in the punitive measures which the courts may impose, that the social problem posed by vandalism will be solved. The dwindling "success rate" of Borstal institutions, approved schools, attendance centres and detention centres—which are one of the factors in the current discussions on whether to abandon the juvenile court system altogether—must lead people who are puzzled and worried about vandalism, and about other forms of delinquency, to wonder where on earth solutions are to be found, and to doubt whether the present clamour for stiffer penalties and punitive sentences would have any effect at all.

DISCONCERTING REFLECTION ON PUNISHMENT

"Punishment is inflicted to stop people doing things; but not only for that purpose. People punish themselves because they feel guilty; and people may punish others because they themselves are frustrated and aggressive. The picture is further complicated by the fact that what is intended as punishment may be pleasurable or even glorifying for the recipient; on the other hand, people may regard themselves as receiving punishment where none is intended.

"Does punishment put an end to unwanted behaviour? It often

stops it temporarily, but is there any evidence that it has a lasting effect? In some extreme and atypical cases, the answer is probably 'yes'. . . . The most objective evidence comes from animals, and shows that punishment *suppresses the activity temporarily* but does not eliminate it. When the likelihood of punishment is removed the unwanted activity reappears. . . . What is even more obvious with children is that, when punishment results in stopping behaviour, the child often finds something else to do as a substitute."

—BRIAN FOSS, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of London.

This observation prompts two thoughts in the present context. Firstly that the "likelihood of punishment" is pretty small in most forms of vandalism, simply because the likelihood of detection is so slight, and secondly that "something else to do as a substitute" may, if one form of vandalism could be stamped out, turn out to be another, even less desirable form. Or, that vandalism itself can be considered as a substitute for something else: an imperfect form of creativity. This was the view of Homer Lane, exemplified in the well-known remark about him (see ANARCHY 39) that he saw in the crimes of the young hooligans who were sent to his Little Commonwealth, "evidence of qualities admirable in themselves and when differently expressed recognizable as the highest virtues".

And this is, after all, more or less the orthodoxy of child psychology. Nina Ridenour in the pamphlet *When Your Child is Destructive* (New York State Society for Mental Health) ends her suggestions by saying "One of the best remedies for the child who is constantly doing destructive damage is to provide him with materials which you are willing to have him take apart. Behind all these suggestions you will see that there lies one main theme: Give the child permissible outlets for his destructive energy until he has matured to the point where added maturity permits him to handle materials constructively, not destructively."

INSIDE EVERY DESTROYER IS A CREATOR FIGHTING TO GET OUT

Meanwhile however we have the fact of vandalism. Do we know anything about it? It is always difficult to say whether any social phenomenon makes news because it is growing, or because it is increasingly evident, or because the newspapers choose to report it. "News" in 1964 was teen-age riots at seaside resorts, by the following winter "news" was malicious damage to trains and obstructions on railway lines, more recently "news" was damage to public telephones. The study now being made by Stan Cohen of public reaction to vandalism seems to suggest that the publicity given it tends to make it one of those self-fulfilling prophecies which thrives on its own news-value. Certainly there are fashions in vandalism, as well as fashions in the reporting of vandalism. At one time it was the beacons on pedestrian crossings which were under attack, at another it was street

lamps, and the replacement of lighting fittings at that time cost our local council thousands a year, young trees in parks and equipment in children's playgrounds were modish objects of destruction, and smashing windows and bulbs and slashing seats on railways have always been fair game. So have building sites and the windows of unoccupied houses.

FROM THE BIZARRE TO THE LETHAL

In Scotland, vandalism reached a peak two years ago, when conservative estimates put the total annual cost of wanton destruction at £1 million, of which Glasgow's share was £400,000. Reports from Scotland describe how "Vandalism ranges from the bizarre to the criminally dangerous. All sections of the community, industry and commerce are affected. Recently, while someone was shooting 17 tame ornamental ducks on Loch Lomond, the Blue Trains, which operate from Glasgow to Balloch and are among British Railways most outstanding examples of modernisation, were once again halted by tinfoil scattered from bridges over the electric conductors. When tinfoil fails, vandals turn their attention to disrupting the system's intricate colour signalling equipment. In a recent three-month period, 1,186 railway carriage windows, each costing £2, were smashed and 12,235 electric light bulbs on trains, each costing 1s., were broken. Oil poured on lines at steep gradients brings heavy trains to a stop, and not long ago an express travelling south to England was halted and the driver taken to hospital to have glass splinters removed from his face and eyes after his cab was stoned.

"Vast damage is done each year to new buildings even when they are desperately required to re-house people from slums. Golf course greens are torn up, cinemas find it impossible to renew insurance cover so seriously are they damaged. On a recent summer evening, while the centre of Edinburgh was still thronged with Festival visitors, the arms of the city's famous floral clock in Princes Street Gardens were badly twisted and 800 plants torn from the intricate design. Several dinghies belonging to a well-known Forth amateur yacht club were badly damaged in the last week of the season. Buoyancy tanks in one dinghy were slashed. This was not discovered until a Force 7 gale capsized the boat and the hapless crew found that, instead of easily righting their craft, they had to swim around for 45 minutes until rescued. Booby traps are stretched across busy roads and so many telephone kiosks are damaged, often by fire, that the Post Office programme of erecting new kiosks is seriously delayed. Damage to schools is extensive and ceaseless. Even churches are no longer immune from attack."

ENGLAND GRINS AND BEARS IT

In England, the Local Government Information Office estimates the cost to local rates alone of vandalism to be well over a million pounds a year. It is difficult to get an accurate estimate as very little of the loss is covered by insurance. "Wanton damage has become so

widespread that insurance premiums inevitably rise following claims. Most councils apparently prefer to grin and bear the loss themselves, finding this cheaper in the long run." So the huge cost of making good damage and loss simply swells their maintenance accounts. Random examples reported to the Information Office: At Southend an average of 25 lifebuoys are cut adrift each year; more than 1,000 street lamps are smashed annually; damage to illuminations on the pier costs £12,000 a year to replace. At Birmingham more than 2,250 panes of glass, costing £1,800 were broken in the city's schools during one summer holiday; park trees were cut down, fences damaged and sports equipment ruined during the same period. At Willesden, in North London, where 2,547 street-lamp bulbs were smashed in *two months* during the winter, a bowling green was cut up, statuary, schools and the swimming pool were damaged, and the council has unsuccessfully attempted to curb the menace by acquiring six Alsatian dogs to accompany park keepers. Completion of a new housing estate at New Addington, Croydon, has been delayed by between nine and twelve months because of persistent vandalism. At least half the windows in the houses and flats have been broken by stones and other missiles. Some have been glazed and broken twice before the dwellings have been made ready for occupation. Vandals have knocked down brickwork, damaged plaster and ceilings, burnt timber, ruined concrete, wrenched out reinforcing steel, broken tiles, ripped out copper, lead and sanitary fittings, plumbing, doors and window frames.

OBJECTS ON THE TRACK

Aimless destruction may leave you speechless with fury at its pointlessness and social cost, and worrying for what it reveals about our society, but it is, of course, relatively trivial compared with other social evils—what about, for instance, our indifference to the rising annual slaughter on the roads? If vandalism is defined as wanton destruction, might not this be included under the same heading? But we are surely right to be concerned at the same indifference to consequences which is terrifyingly evident when vandalism takes the form of placing objects on railway lines. There is here some evidence of an increase. In a parliamentary reply last summer, the Minister of Transport stated that "In 1964 some 6,300 instances were reported of acts apparently intended to disrupt or hinder the operations of the railway services; this compares with about 4,100 such cases in 1963; corresponding figures for earlier years are not available. From the evidence available it would seem that the majority of these acts were committed by juveniles of school age."

On March 19th, 1965, a passenger train was derailed as a result of objects placed on the line at Elm Park, Essex, and two people, the driver and a passenger, were killed. Two days later, two boys aged 11 were charged in court after admitting placing an object on the line near Gospel Oak in North London:

"When the chairman asked the boy's father if his son realised the

seriousness of the offence, the father replied 'No.' The chairman repeated to the boy: Did you know what you were doing? The boy: I thought there might be an accident. The chairman: Did you really want an accident where people could have been killed or crippled for life? The boy: Yes."

On the following day, a man aged 33 was charged with placing a concrete troughing cover, two pieces of wood, and two house bricks on the railway line at Benfleet. It was simply one of many hundreds of incidents on that particular line. Last month, on February 7th, 1966, concrete blocks were found on the line near Chippenham, Wilts., and even while the track was being searched and obstructions removed, more were being placed on the line, in the path of the Bristol-Paddington express.

I wrote to British Railways to ask if there were any statistics available to indicate whether the number of these incidents had increased or decreased after the fatal accident at Elm Park last year, but have not yet had a reply. Newspaper reports do not seem to show any diminution.

"What", I was asked, "can you suggest as a libertarian solution for *this* problem?" "Well," I replied lamely, "there isn't any evidence that the authoritarian ones work." And this, of course, is true. Only an infinitesimal proportion of the would-be train wreckers are caught, or ever could be caught. Consequently their activities have to be channelled in a different direction. Enlist them as train spotters! Free rides with the motorman!

The reason why the idea of setting out to enlist the trackside nuisances as railway enthusiasts is less trivial or sentimental than it sounds is that in another, lesser, field of vandalism, this approach has been remarkably successful, where there have been people imaginative enough to try it.

SPARE THAT TREE

I am thinking of the preservation of trees. The British of any age at all tend to be tree-vandals. (If a man buys a house with a tree in it, the first thing he thinks of doing is to chop it down. If there are trees in your street, the chances are that the Council, once a year, in the winter, cut back the last year's growth, so that when they are not in leaf their mutilated wrecks look like pictures of battlefield trees in the first world war, and when they are in leaf they look like toffee-apples.) But juvenile damage to young trees on new estates is best prevented by enlisting their potential destroyers as tree wardens, giving *them* the responsibility. The important thing about this technique is that it works. Of the many examples of its successful use, let me quote two reports. First, from Camberwell in London: "A way to stop children from destroying flowering trees on a new housing estate has been found by Camberwell Council. When a few years ago Camberwell's largest estate on Denmark Hill was to be planted, the council wrote to each of its tenants asking if their children were interested in

looking after the trees. Nearly a hundred came forward. They were given two trees each to plant, had their names put on the labels, and were responsible for watering and guarding. As a result only three cases of malicious damage were reported. The trees are now established and the children have formed a tree protection club."

Secondly, from one of the New Towns: "Trees growing in Welwyn Garden City New Town, Herts., are being named after children as part of a plan to beat vandalism. The scheme to let boys and girls in the town have a 'personal' tree has been started by the development corporation which has had bills running into hundreds of pounds for replacing damaged trees. Mr. William Playle, a member of the development corporation board and chairman of the local magistrates said yesterday: "The corporation was disturbed by the amount of vandalism, particularly to trees, and this idea is proving a big success'."

And the Civil Trust, in its report *Derelict Land*, comments on the same thing in discussing afforestation and planting projects:

"Vandalism has, in fact, been the most frequent primary cause of failure in planting schemes, particularly in mining areas, where a staked sapling seems to provoke the most destructive instincts of the young. There are only two ways of dealing with it: child-proof fencing and education. The cost of fencing varies widely with the size and shape of the area to be planted, but an average figure is about £30 an acre—which is often more than the combined cost of purchasing the land, raising the stock and planting it. Education is cheaper, and can be more effective, especially if it takes the form of enlisting the active help of schoolchildren in the planting and management of the trees as well as teaching them how trees grow. Young vandals who sneer at exhortation and look upon fencing as a challenge are likely to be fiercely vigilant in the defence of trees they have planted themselves."

NOT THE SAME PROBLEM

There is a principle behind this technique, and if it works with one kind of vandalism, it is reasonable to assume that it would work with others. The problem, especially in a society in which people do not have responsibility for and to society, because everything is done by *them* and not by *us*, is to find the right way in which to employ this principle in other fields. How on earth, for example, could it be employed in the case of the current wave of destruction of public telephones? There are areas of London and Liverpool and other cities without a single public telephone in working order. "These boxes are being wrecked," said a Post Office official last month, "quicker than we can cope with repairs." One gets the impression, however, that a large part of the wave of telephone wrecking is not "pure" vandalism, but "pure", that is, utilitarian, theft. A problem, certainly, but not the same problem. (It results from the vulnerability of, and the amount of silver coinage contained by, the new STD type telephones. Colin Mitchell believes that the typical telephone vandal is an adult thief, and that one tour of a district produces a considerable amount of

money. Philip Sansom, on the other hand, declares that the telephones are broken in sheer exasperation by users who are infuriated by the inefficiency of the STD system.)

THE TARGETS

The targets for vandalism seem to be things which are *public* property—things accessible from the street, or in the street or in public places. Has this any significance, or does it simply mean that malicious damage on private property does not get reported? Does it mean that public property is fair game—as indeed it seems to be for millions of people who would be indignant at being called vandals? A Minister of Housing once complained that "Once people leave their homes they seem to feel free from any need to maintain civilised standards of behaviour". Can we see in vandalism a protest against the anonymous "them" who rule our lives? The widespread malicious damage to school premises certainly suggests a desire to settle accounts with at least one symbol of authority. Or is it simply that damage to public property is less likely to result in detection and punishment than breaking and entering private property: that vandalism is, after all, a very minor form of delinquency?

ALTERNATIVES

The kind of non-punitive answer to problems of vandalism which we are usually inclined to peddle is to envisage non-destructive alternatives—some kind of socially useful activity into which the potential vandals could be attracted or cajoled. Often this kind of solution is proposed in a not so libertarian way, in, for example, the advocacy of compulsory national service. As *New Society* commented once, "National Service, like the first world war or the D-day landings, has always exercised a great fascination, especially for those not directly involved. It has come to seem a panacea for many ills. A riot at Birmingham provokes the inevitable demand that the Mods and Rockers be called to the colours. A shortage of teachers or the need of the aged for company naturally suggests a form of civilian military service. Building sea walls, civilising the undeveloped nations, extending the motorways, reclaiming the Wash, keeping Britain tidy, have all been offered as tasks for the young. And as the young do not seem to do these things spontaneously, compulsory service to the community is offered as an alternative." Happily we don't have to consider the idea seriously as it is a non-starter politically in any case, but when we envisage voluntary social service as an alternative to vandalism, the sardonic conclusion of this comment remains: "Even voluntary youth corps have often failed to find enough worthy jobs to do".

These voluntary service organisations for the young have grown at an extraordinary rate during the last few years. The oldest of them, International Voluntary Service (secretary Frank Judd, 72 Oakley Square, N.W.1), is too well-known to need mention. Then there is Community Service Volunteers (Toynbee Hall, London, E.1), founded

three-and-a-half years ago by Alec Dickson, who also started Voluntary Service Overseas, and Task Force, which was started two years ago by Anthony Steen, and which deliberately seeks to harness the "desperate undirected energy" of unattached youth. "There was to be no compulsion to join anything, and, above all, there was to be no taint of charity work or 'do gooding'." It has now over 7,000 volunteers. And, of course, there are hundreds of purely local and informal groups undertaking similar tasks. But the people they reach are, inevitably, seldom those who are "at risk" for vandalism or delinquency in general. And there is a shortage of "worthy jobs" which at the same time provide the same kind of kicks as we assume vandalism must give.

What alternatives could be invented which are simply imaginative rather than useful? In the early issue of ANARCHY which discussed adventure playgrounds it was remarked "That there should be anything novel in simply providing facilities for the spontaneous, unorganised activities of childhood is an indication of how deeply rooted in our social behaviour is the urge to direct and limit the flow of life. But when they get the chance, in the country, or where there are large gardens, woods or bits of waste land, what are children doing? Enclosing space, making caves, tents, dens from old bricks, bits of wood and corrugated iron. . . . But how can children find this kind of private world in towns. . . ." Can we extend the playground notion to provide outlets for what now passes as vandalism?

The British treat their country as one vast dustbin—and it helps to get the whole business of vandalism in proportion if we remember that it costs more than *twelve* million pounds a year just to clear up the litter that the good citizens leave in their streets. Quite apart from this, they have taken, since the bottom fell out of the second-hand car market, to abandoning their cars in the streets too, where they stay, gradually shedding all moveable parts, until the local authority finally takes the remains away. One could warmly recommend them as a target for vandalisation, were it not for the dangerous delight some children have found in dropping lighted matches into their petrol tanks—a game which has already caused at least one fatality. Could we envisage municipal dumps where, with minimal supervision, boys might continue the process of destruction?

Could demolition be organised in the same way? Not the spectacular jobs which call for great skill and involve risk, but minor demolitions which small groups could undertake—and of course do, on unfenced demolition sites, anyway. There are again problems of supervision and insurance, but the thoroughness with which children execute unauthorised demolitions lead one to suppose that here could be a socially acceptable form of vandalism.

VANDALISM AS CATHARSIS

To what extent is vandalism a form of catharsis: a release of intolerable tensions: and consequently creative in that in the absence of objects to destroy it would be released on people? William Gladstone

used to chop down trees when he felt frustrated. The only difference between him and the tree-vandals is that they were *his* trees. The "Krazy Kitchen" type of fairground show, where people pay for the privilege of breaking cups and saucers and so on, is universally popular. Maybe every town should have one. And perhaps this is the reason *why* the windows of unoccupied buildings are regarded as fair game. David Downes in his new book *The Delinquent Solution*, noticing the relative absence of "malice" in delinquent activities in the area studied, remarks that "Possibly the most archetypal piece of 'malice' witnessed in Poplar was that of a group of school-boys throwing stones and systematically breaking glass in a deserted tenement block. No harm was done—the block was due for demolition—and the impulse worked itself out in twenty minutes." A wider range of socially acceptable, if not socially useful, outlets for destructiveness, might reduce the volume of serious vandalism.

VANDALISM AS ART

One of the dictionary definitions of the word "vandal" is "a wanton destroyer of works of art", and one testimony to the power of art is its attraction to vandals: whether to the woman who poked her finger through one of the Bonnards at the exclusive private view of the current exhibition at the Royal Academy, or to the good citizens of Zurich who destroyed Max Bill's sculpture in their city with their walking-sticks to signify their disapproval of abstract art. Theo Crosby reminds us that public works of art must be "almost incredibly robust to stand up to average vandalism. A favourite pastime of Stockholmers used to be Sunday morning bottle throwing at 'Sea God and Maiden' on the quayside. Carved in granite it has emerged thirty years later loved and cherished by all, more or less unscathed. Any public sculpture can expect a similar baptism; even mosaic must withstand the assaults of a generation of teenagers with nail files."

William Turnbull has been experimenting with vandalisable sculpture, which can be adapted by people to their own needs. You walk into them, for they are "arenas of human activity". Like playgrounds, Lawrence Alloway writes, "they are design systems which can incorporate, without noise, the systems (uses and interests) of any number of spectators. The reliefs could be damaged, defaced, and scattered with litter, without the pathos that formal statues get from time and the public." But the most radical attempt to utilise vandalism as art is Gustav Metzger's Auto Destructive Art. His sensational demonstration of it at the Architectural Association last year was described thus by a witness:

"The demonstration of ADA commenced with the 'acid-nylon technique' in which 2in. x 2in. slide frames covered with nylon net were touched with diluted acid and projected through a lantern on to a screen. Later the audience moved to strategic positions around Ching's Yard where the major display, which had taken all day to prepare, was to take place. From a large wooden frame several sheets

of glass were suspended a few feet above the ground. When the suspending threads were cut, they smashed predictably on the flagstones. A large number of water-filled polythene bags suspended round a length of 4in. x 2in. were pierced by an artist's assistant who prodded them with a knife on a pole or cut their threads to cries of 'Obscene' as they spilled their contents. The artist missed the opportunity for a certain *frisson* which goldfish in the bags would have provided. Instead a lethal armoury of fluorescent lighting tubes were thrown dart fashion from the top of the building to disappear in gas and powdered glass, and soon an Assistant with a pair of pliers gingerly carried three hot metal plates into the yard and placed them on a large wooden frame. Polythene bags of water were lobbed at them and sometimes hit, to produce small puffs of steam. It was about this time that the artist began to lose his grip on the proceedings as an understandably restive but ever-hopeful audience contributed its own ideas to the aesthetic of auto-destruction. One cup and saucer sailing out of a window raised a small cheer and was soon followed by a fair proportion of the crockery from Chings. Large plaster sculptures exhibited at the Carnival were manfully carried to the surrounding rooftops there to make their additions to the aesthetic of falling bodies. They were followed by a couple of fire extinguishers, one of which inspired envious cries and encouragement during its orgasm with a fallen body. Budding auto-destructive artists looked around for further aesthetic experience—an earth-filled tub and a spotlight were sacrificed in the interests of art and . . . everyone had a great time wallowing in an orgy of artistic endeavour."

This performance may have demonstrated to its audience the fatuity of Auto-Destructive Art, but it must also have reminded them how close to the surface is the vandal in all of us. And perhaps it also suggested to them the need for permissible outlets for our destructive urges.

AND CREATIVE ONES TOO

"We live in an age," says Donald Mason, "when old men deliver homilies on vandalism while allowing the organised destruction of both town and countryside; preach the abolition of want and disease while maintaining the sanctity of private possession." For the anarchist, the citizen of a city which does not yet exist, the real creative vandalism is revolution. He would like to turn the rebels without a cause into revolutionaries. Political awareness, writes David Downes in *The Delinquent Solution*, "is ultimately the only alternative to delinquency for the stifled working-class adolescent." There seemed to be a moment—early in the history of CND and the Committee of 100—when we were approaching a union of disaffected youth and political awareness. The moment has faded, but there is a legacy of ideas and experience which could conceivably carry over into the kind of "creative disorder" envisaged by Robert Swann in his articles in *ANARCHY* 41 (July 1964) and *Peace News* (1.1.65). Realistically it is too much to hope that aimless destructiveness can be somehow made over

into revolutionary consciousness in a vacuum. But if we want to change our petty delinquents we must change ourselves and our own social attitudes. As Paul Goodman put it: The cure for their violent sexuality is to allow them guiltless sex. The cure for their defiance is to teach them real enemies to fight. The cure for their foolish activism is to provide them a world that has worthwhile tasks.

Creative Vandalism: a case history

LOUIS WOUDHUYSEN

This account of a unique piece of creative vandalism was sent by Mr. Lewis Woudhuysen to the journal of the Society of Industrial Artists, from which we reproduce it with acknowledgements.

*

IT SOUNDS ABSURD to call a London Electricity Board transformer chamber box an object of beauty, but Wimbledon possesses just such an object. At the bottom of a quiet cul-de-sac, Sunnyside, S.W.19, stands a magnificent example of Victorian art, which until last year was known only to those who scribbled upon its drab green sides. Constructed at the turn of the century, it resembles a gigantic, ornate pillar box, thirteen feet high and a yard in diameter. Its owners, the London Electricity Board, were content to leave its corporation green unpainted, flaking and covered with graffiti. Thus it remained until July 1964 when two boys, Alan Kitching and Giles Oliver, undertook to repaint it and restore its potential glory.

Without asking permission they painted the sides white picking out the detail in a pleasant green and brown. At one point, while Giles Oliver was standing on the object's roof painting the elegant pinnacle, a passer-by asked Alan Kitching, who was wearing a white coat, what they were up to. He replied that he was a doctor and that the figure on top was an inmate from a mental asylum undergoing occupational therapy under his supervision. The passer-by opened his mouth very wide, gave them an odd look and hurried off down the road. Fortunately no one questioned their right to decorate the "object" and in one afternoon it was transformed. It became an object of interest and amusement and for several months remained unscathed. However, by this summer the ravages of winter and renewed scribbling demanded a repainting. This time four boys, Martin Ransom, Giles Washbourn,

Hugh Vinter and Giles Oliver, all of them under the influence of post-exam euphoria, planned a more ambitious colour scheme, gold and white on a black background.

The black they painted on the evening of Saturday, July 17th, leaving Sunday free for the details. They were encouraged by universal approval of those who passed by, but someone, offended either by the colours adopted, or by the violation of the Sabbath or even the illegality of the venture, complained to the police. It was only mid-morning and the boys had not yet completed the white, when the police duly arrived in great numbers to stop any further "defacement". The policemen were obviously amused, "Let's have your name, Da Vinci," they asked Giles Oliver. Having taken their names and addresses the police departed and it seemed that the object would have to remain an unfinished masterpiece.

The police are not often patrons of the arts, but they reappeared an hour later to inform Hugh Vinter that the LEB had permitted painting to continue. The boys resumed the work aided towards evening by numerous friends. By the end of the day the structure resembled a delicious middle-eastern mosque, its pinnacle of gold reflecting the setting sun.

The result is richly Victorian, the moulding being given surprising lightness by the gold and white, dazzlingly in contrast with the solidly black panels. The object is worth a visit for it is an excellent example of the great care which the Victorians lavished upon the most insignificant objects, a care for detail and total effect which has been equalled by these students in the decoration of the "object". Their civilised "vandalism" is a triumph for Victorian art; the judicious application of a little illegal paint would do much to brighten our streets and restore the fast-disappearing remnants of Victoriana to their rightful prominence.

The principle of of creative vandalism

MARTIN SMALL

A CHINESE EMPEROR owned 17 priceless Ming vases in which he delighted more than in all his other possessions. A special detachment of his personal bodyguard was set to keep watch over and to guard these valuable objects. One perfectly normal day one of these specially selected young men knocked over a vase and it smashed in pieces on the floor. The emperor was furious; and most hurt. He ordered the young man to be executed with the utmost pomp and with the most splendid attendant ceremony: this to include the prominent display of the remaining vases in some public place the more indubitably to make known the iniquity and the depth of the young soldier's subversion of the emperor's peace of mind. All the people were much impressed. One old and venerable gentleman approached the platform on which the sixteen vases were standing; and with one blow of his walking stick he smashed the lot. The emperor was not only furious; and most hurt; but totally at a loss; he was, indeed, flabbergasted. An involuntary and unpremeditated attack upon his imperial dignity and existence was, if distasteful and by no means to be allowed to pass with impunity, at least comprehensible—there were immediate and obvious ways in which order, when threatened by such an event, could be restored. But this was a wanton act of violence, at once deliberate and without meaning: an act of vandalism: in such extraordinary circumstances the restitution of order would require, would depend upon, the reduction of the act into the common course of events by means of a full explanation: only then would it be possible to exact due retribution. "What is this monstrous thing that you have done?" he demanded in his loudest voice: all the people heard and wondered: what would the offender say, so outcast and depraved as he was by his own act from the common order of humanity? "I am an old man," he replied, "whose life is at an end: those sixteen vases were sixteen young men whose lives were to be cut off at their very beginning: if, when my own life is at an end, I can save sixteen lives which are but beginning, I will have done something that will live and not die."

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The principle of creative vandalism is the reconciliation of opposites: it means the reconciliation of situations of things, and in particular the reconciliation of states of mind, that are apparently—and even, in

the immediate circumstances and structure of affairs, are actually—in conflict, on the level of some higher, more essential reality. This is the principle of anarchism, of the anarchist attitude to things. It is the principle of the construction or simply of the discovery of the real unity which underlies: which is imitated by, in a way that at once both betrays and bears witness to it: the apparent or immediate unity, by the destruction or simply through the transcendence of the latter. The principle of anarchism is the act of creative vandalism which appears to destroy but which in reality creates: it destroys that which does not truly exist, in order that that which does essentially exist may also immediately appear to exist: its object is to reveal the true nature of all things, and what is destroyed is destroyed simply by that nature of its existence: that which is merely an appearance does not cease to be, for it has never really existed, but the act of creative vandalism destroys even its appearance of existence. “What can be smashed must be smashed: whatever withstands the blow is fit to survive, what flies into pieces is rubbish; in any case, hit right and left, from that no harm can or will come”, said the Russian “nihilist”, Pisarev. The man is what is left when everything else has been taken away: the basis, the reason, of creative vandalism and of anarchism is the existence, the actual and indestructible identity, of a man, any man, of a whole world of men. “Pray for this poor abandoned sinner who is going from this fire to an eternal and unquenchable fire!” said a priest to the crowd assembled to watch a heretic burnt at the stake. “So you say,” said the condemned man, “but I know better.”

The act of the old man is an act of creative vandalism. It destroys the appearance of an existence: it destroys an apparent threat to the existence of sixteen young men and to the existence of the emperor which in different ways is what appears to be, what is believed to be, the meaning of the existence or non-existence of the sixteen vases. The physical destruction of the vases is an act at once appropriate and superfluous, and it is both for one and the same reason. The apparent existence of the vases, as essential constituents of an individual human identity and of a social order, is not their real existence. The revelation of their real existence—or rather, more simply, of the non-existence of their apparent existence—is achieved, not by their physical destruction, but by the old man’s understanding of their non-essentiality, of their inability to threaten the human existence of himself or of any man—an understanding which he communicates not simply by the knocking over of the vases, but by the manner in which he performs this act: by means of his rational fearlessness. To the ordinary observer the old man seems to have destroyed himself by his act: but in fact he has simply destroyed the illusion of the dependence of his existence upon the existence of the vases the destruction of which is merely accidentally, in the immediate state of affairs, the instrument of his self-identification: his life is at an end, but the meaning and the quality of his life is eternal, reborn with every moment of truth, of human self-recognition.

The emperor is armoured and imprisoned in an illusion of existence built by fear. And the product of fear is avarice, the desire to establish

and to protect an existence and an identity by means of ever more efficient apparatus of power and property. “Avarice,” said the Roman philosopher Seneca, “can do much: it can add field to field and enlarge its dominions beyond measure, but it can never give back to man what he once enjoyed: for he once enjoyed the whole world and all things therein.” But what is feared is only apparently any one or more threats to existence: what is actually feared is the vast and depthless possibility of human existence itself, for the sake of a timid and shallow version of this existence masquerading as the real thing. And yet this fear is but the symptom of a belief, it is a contradiction of the acceptance of existence and it ceases to be in the simple understanding of what it is that is being contradicted, what it is that is being feared. The object of the act of creative vandalism is not to destroy the emperor’s fear but rather it is simply to reveal that fear for what it is and thus to cause it to cease to appear to be what it is not, an obstacle to belief, and to transform it into what at its highest point it actually is, an obscure premonition of that belief and acceptance. The emperor understands what his fear does not prevent but rather urges him to believe, when he understands that the old man’s act of self-destruction is but a simple act of self-identification. The anarchist theory, the theory of creative vandalism, is a theory of a human identity which eternally and universally is and is, in the perfect freedom of its cognition of and detached absorption in itself, the perfect mode of existence as such. It is an identity which finds itself in all things and in all experience and is contained by none: an identity which uses and enjoys the whole world, but which can possess and retain nothing: an identity which is at home in all places and in none. It is an identity whose power of self-cognition can be turned to self-deceit, but which finds even the form of that deception to be the involuntary mediator of the truth. “How can I be free?” asked the disciple. “How do you know that you are in chains?” was the reply.

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 59:

THE WHITE PROBLEM

ALBERT MELTZER’S ARTICLE IN ANARCHY 59, “To Hell with Liberalism” makes many valid points about this widespread disease, which is at best useless and at its worst, anti-revolutionary. But his observations on the causes of prejudice and the attitudes towards coloured people of different classes demand some comment. There are still people who can see nothing wrong with the working class and comrade Meltzer seems to be one of them. The statement that colour clashes in slums are due to the housing situation may be true, but this is not the whole case. I have never lived in a working-class slum, but have spent all my life in working-class housing schemes, and prejudice here is as widespread as in the slums. The only reason why there are no clashes is that there are no coloureds.

Also I deny that the middle classes of different colours spend their time being affable over hollyhocks. These people want coloureds next door even less than the working class do; some of the most glaring examples of racialism having occurred in middle-class districts. The root of prejudice is not in economics, but stems from physical repulsion. In a story by Guy de Maupassant a mother does not allow her son to marry a negress, the reason given being "What a pity she's so black. It is really too much. She's too black." Until we realise that the problem is basically physical and only aggravated by economics, we cannot hope to solve it.

Aberdeen

I. R. MITCHELL

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I DON'T THINK YOUR COLUMNS have ever carried a more singular article than that by Albert Meltzer. Reading now like a millenarian tract, now like Peter Simple, it can be of no possible value to those concerned either with the nature of racialism or with the movement to combat it. If we protest, or try to act, against racial discrimination, we are, apparently, to be written off as "liberals" and "do-gooders" and deserve half-bricks thrown at us. (Mr. Jordan would agree with that.) Has Meltzer ever heard, one wonders, of Freedom Riders and "sit-ins"? What does he understand by the line, "Black and white together, we shall not be moved"? What does he make of Jeremy Westall's reference in the same issue of ANARCHY to the "small, brave band of white liberals" in Rhodesia?

Why, Meltzer asks, do we not call our organisations the Society for Poor Blacks or League for the Downtrodden Jews?—or, presumably, the Up the Niggers Movement, or the Yids Defence Society? I don't know, perhaps Meltzer is Peter Simple?

London

DAVID ROSE

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Albert Meltzer replies:—

DE MAUPASSANT'S MATRON may not have wanted a negress as a daughter-in-law, but Thackeray's Mr. Osborne certainly did—with Miss Swartz's money she was not "too black" to be sought after by Vanity Fair. I know a London hotel doorman now fawning on maharajahs, nabobs and coloured premiers who was horrified at having a Pakistani neighbour. He is prejudiced. But is this prejudice "physical repulsion" or economic? The well-bred white lady of the American South until recently (and some to this day) was breast-fed by a negress, brought up by her Negro mammy, driven by a Negro chauffeur, washed, coiffeured and dressed by a Negro maid, and taken to a restaurant where Negro waiters served food prepared and cooked by Negroes—if at this point a Negro had sat down to eat in the restaurant she would have fainted with "physical repulsion". But is this again not economic? The Rhodesians and South Africans are hand-pampered by Negro labour. They have no physical repulsion until the point of equality comes. This is not the situation in England today, of course, where the anti-coloured brigade have not a superiority complex but a marked inferiority one. They feel immigrants are better off than they are, and

one has to put a bit of backbone into them. My point about the middle classes is not that they are all tolerant; but tolerance or intolerance is something they can pick and choose. Both attitudes reveal patronage—"yes, I do discriminate" or "no, I do not".

What can I say to Complicated David who imagines that it is more insulting to call people "Yids" and "Niggers" than to pat them on the head and say "I have no objection to persons of the Hebrew persuasion" or "I do not mind whether you are black or white, nobody shall move you whilst I am here"? He is in love with the campfire—it is enough for him that there are mass movements and Freedom Riders and sit-ins and sunburned kibbutzniks singing the Wacht am Rhein around the blazing cross, and his pejorative word is "singular". What use, he asks, is my article to "those concerned with" the nature of racialism or "the movement" to combat it; for him, "the party is more than the cause and the cause more than the people". He does not ask whether it might have been of any use to those *affected* by the white problem. I would have to be a very Simple Peter not to see that his tolerance and Colin Jordan's intolerance are not identical but well-matched.

Peter Simple and the democratic fallacy

ANTHONY IDKINS

A LITTLE WHILE AGO, the *Daily Telegraph's* Peter Simple, who likes to give the impression of fearlessly scotching humbug, directed his attention to that universal Aunt Sally, Professor Toynbee. Apparently, Professor Toynbee had advised America to accept both Red China and the fact that some peoples had already chosen Communism, just as England and America had chosen to be democratic bourgeois states. Simple's acid comment was that no one had ever *chosen* to go Communist; it had always been forced upon them. A clearly implied corollary was that the rest of us had chosen to be bourgeois and democratic.

If this were merely an endearing eccentric idea of Peter Simple, it would not be worth arguing about, but the fact is that his assertion reflects a widely-held belief—indeed, an almost unchallengeable dogma. It has been challenged, of course, most notably by Tom Paine, but as that was more than 150 years ago, it is perhaps worth raising the

matter again. The simple case against Mao Tse Tung, and against all heads of government imposed after a revolution, appears to be that they were not voted into power by a majority of voters following a secret ballot—this is simple and ignores a great deal: is Mao derided because he overthrew Chiang or because he was consolidating an earlier revolution against an Imperial dynasty? Why are the leaders of the new African states condemned for not introducing two-party systems as used by the English in England, when they could as easily be commended for adopting the autocratic paternalism of their former colonial masters? But as I am more concerned with what I term the *democratic fallacy*, I propose to ignore such complications and, for the sake of this argument, accept that there is something fundamentally wicked about denying citizens universal secret franchise—except if they happen to be black in Southern Rhodesia, or women in Switzerland, or—at present—under twenty-one in England. . . .

It is accepted, then, that some of the citizens of the democracies can vote; but for what can they vote? For a list of candidates or for a choice of candidates; for a political party or for a political platform; but not—except in France—for a constitution or, more radically, for a change of constitution. What Paine said about the imposition of a monarchy in England still applies. Whether the majority of Englishmen actually want a constitutional monarchy, or even a party-dominated democracy, has never been put to the vote; it is merely assumed that we do. We can decide that Mr. Wilson and his party should be replaced by Mr. Heath and his party but we shall not be asked, when the time comes, who should succeed Elizabeth II; Charles III will be imposed upon us whether we like it or not, simply because the ruling class—and not the *present* ruling class, some of whom have at least been elected by a fairly wide franchise, but the ruling class of 250 years ago, a few of whom were elected by a very limited franchise—decided that so things should be. So-called socialist or liberal prime ministers may come and go but the titular head of our country is automatically a conservative whose mandate to rule is based only on heredity and tradition. It may well be that the majority of Englishmen, even in the second half of the twentieth century, prefer a form of government based on late seventeenth century thinking but I and, I imagine, many others, no more feel we have *chosen* this system than an individual Russian or Chinese feels that he has chosen **Communism**.

In fact, many contemporary Chinese and Russians have the edge on me for it is obvious that, in some ways, a government that comes about as a result of a revolution is more democratic and more *chosen* than a government that rules by virtue of being fixed within a traditional system. In most instances a revolutionary government comes to power because an overwhelming number of citizens—either disillusioned voters or the disenfranchised—are tired of the existing form of government and despair of replacing it constitutionally. Certainly, they may have been egged on by a revolutionary political party, but

so is the democratic voter for a traditional party used; he is bribed by promises or flattery, and sometimes he is bought. And certainly, once the revolution is in being, they may be taken over and even betrayed by the revolutionary party, but a revolutionary situation must have been present and this situation will have been caused by the conditions existing under the traditionally imposed government. It seems fair to hazard, therefore, that—at least initially—a revolutionary government can legitimately claim a fairly broad body of positive support; which a government elected within the framework of a traditional system cannot possibly claim: it can produce voting figures in support of its policy but not explicitly in support of its fundamental existence.

It is always said—by Peter Simple, the US Government, etc.—that, given a free secret vote, the Russian and Chinese peoples would immediately say no to Communism and choose instead to be governed by a bi-party democratic system, with a constitutional monarch or an executive president. But very probably they would not so choose. Nevertheless, a free vote would at least clear the air and if Communism carried the day, we should have to admit that what we hate is not so much the imposition of a government by a revolution and the apparent lack of choice but Communism itself or, more correctly, a system that we do not like, one that contradicts our own.

Conversely, if—say—our government, constantly nagged by Communists about putting up with a constitutional monarchy without consulting the will of the people, if they gave way and held a referendum on this subject, could it predict with absolute confidence that a vote in favour of constitutional monarchy would be returned? Probably yes, but not certainly and, anyway, why should they give way to the demands of a government hostile to their way of life? Governments of whatever complexion are always able to believe in their right to govern and, once installed, are averse from changing the rules. It is not the fact of choice that is important to them but the fact that they appear to have been chosen—and the proof of this is that they are in power!

It will be argued that, in a democracy, there is nothing to stop the formation of a new party with new theories and a new platform but, at best, this is only partially true. Thus, in the United States both the Communists and the Anarchists are proscribed and, as things are at present, it is possible to believe that even a serious socialist party would also be proscribed. Similarly, it is hard to imagine that a serious—as opposed to eccentric—republican party would be allowed to flourish in England, although the method of outright banning might be thought too clumsy. And in general, reformers and rebels are told—with a kindly pat on the head in the first instance—to go away and to work within the constitution; if they get seriously out of line or become too radical, they are hit much harder on the head.

And this is logical; no ruling class or government, working within a constitution that has been devised by a former version of itself, is

going to let a new party change that constitution or the system, and this, by definition, is the goal of a revolutionary party. Therefore, a revolutionary party is obliged to resort to unconstitutional means and, if there is sufficient support—usually financial or military in the case of a right-wing revolutionary party, and *popular* (a proletarian or agrarian or even a middle-class grouping) in the case of a left-wing revolutionary party—it will succeed in overthrowing the constitutional government and becoming the government, with a changed or modified constitution, in its place. And, like all governments, it will not have been chosen by all but, without doubt, it will have been chosen by some and—either more or less spuriously than its predecessor—be able to claim that it represents “the will of the people” or “the spirit of the age” or “the national character” or “the ideals and aspirations of the ruritanian nation/state/land”.

Therefore, I think it is at least politic to believe that Professor Toynbee is right and Peter Simple wrong: we must assume that the Chinese have chosen Mao no less than we accept that the Americans have chosen Johnson; similarly, Nkrumah stands for Ghana as Wilson stands for England. And if Mao is to be overthrown or outvoted, it should be by the Chinese and not by the Americans; and the Chinese would be advised not to try to impose either Communism or Governor Wallace on the Americans.

But of course, in an ideal world that is only the first step: ultimately, however much both right and left traditionalists may dislike the idea, it will be necessary to get rid of *any* man who thinks in terms of *Chinese* and *American* or *Communist* and *Capitalist*—Johnson as well as Mao; both Nkrumah and de Gaulle; not to mention the pragmatic Mr. Wilson (or the pragmatic Mr. Heath) and the constitutional monarchy they both seek to perpetuate, along with their parties and themselves.

ANARCHISM AND ACADEMIC FAILURE

(See ANARCHY 53)

PETER NEVILLE sends his apologies to correspondents, but pressure of work, both peace and academic, prevents him from replying to all good enough to write to him, at this time. He will reply as soon as time is available. Meanwhile note that response has been so poor, from ex-student anarchists in Britain that there is not enough material to build up a questionnaire for a pilot study which would have been scientifically objective. An alternative method will have to be used to get over the apparent mistrust of this type of project, before proceeding further.

ANARCHISM AND CRIME: A REPLY

ANARCHY 59 CONTAINS TWO CRITICISMS of my article on *Anarchism and Crime*, and I fear that the major aspects of my thesis have not been understood by these two critics.

Mr. Cohen's contribution is quite short, but beyond quoting what I have said, and illustrating it with a quote from Lord Denning, he fails to make clear any inconsistencies. It is true that there is more consensus of opinion about factory accidents than homosexuality, but this is an irrelevancy. The fact is that in the working of a factory, or of a social system, maladjustments will arise. If accidents with machinery are eliminated then people will agitate about the hardness of the benches; if the benches are padded then people will agitate about the monotony of the work, and so forth. This is an inevitable tendency along the same gradient. In the same way, if murder and rape were eliminated from society then rudeness on buses and cheating at Bingo would seem to be more serious crimes, and would be treated as such in the penal code. As for consensus of opinion—that is rather putting the cart before the horse: abortion, drug peddling and homosexuality become abhorred by many people *because* they are subject to criminal sanctions. Again, injury and death are seen as regrettable—“but only under certain circumstances and by certain people”—otherwise we would not make, sell and use weapons. Mr. Cohen's last paragraph is rather cryptic: granted that ruling elites tend to define the norms, and anarchists, among other people, are aware of this, so what?

Mr. Vine is perturbed at my being “excessively scathing” about do-gooders and liberal reformers. I will leave most of his remarks unanswered because they happen to be dealt with incidentally elsewhere in ANARCHY 59 by Albert Meltzer. But one thing I would like to comment on is the danger that well-intentioned liberals like Mr. Vine are the unwitting agents of increasing interference with other people for no good purpose.

Let me take the proposed Family Courts as a talking point. At present, young villains know more or less where they stand. Certain behaviour is proscribed as “criminal”; get caught at it and you get on the gradient of conditional discharge, fine or probation, detention centre, borstal, prison. Not a pretty state of things, but that is how our jungle works. It is now proposed that this system shall be replaced, for younger offenders, by a system of Family Courts. There will be less of the guilty/not guilty dichotomy, and indeed less hard and fast law for young people. These Courts will be supposed to be all-wise and know just what is best for young people. Now it is all very well to treat the guilty villain with kindness “for his own good”, but will young people ever be sure they are quite innocent and therefore free from interference in their lives “for their own good”? There seems to be a huge and vaguely defined area in which busybodies can throw their weight around and poke their noses into the affairs of young people with terribly sweeping powers at their command, if some of

the proposals for Family Courts go through.

Mr. Vine writes that "It is fairly conclusively established that anti-social behaviour is a reflection of a sense of inadequacy in dealing with other human beings, an indication of a basic lack of integration, perhaps we might say 'happiness', within the personality. That psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers should be concerned to remedy this, to awaken the deviant person to his ability to conquer these defects, should surely be something which any anarchists should approve."

Perhaps. But who is to decide just what is "anti-social"? Why, these all-wise psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers of course!

Now I should like to put it on record with all possible seriousness that in my opinion many psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers whom I have known are utterly incompetent to judge what is best for young people.

Unfortunately our society pays enormous respect to sheer poppy-cock when it is spoken with the backing of professional authority. Unfortunately too, the business of interfering with the lives of other people "for their own good" attracts the twisted types who, behind their professional masks, are simply in it for kicks.

I am afraid that between Mr. Vine and me there is so great a gulf that he does not quite realise its extent. To my mind anarchism implies struggling towards the realisation that the law is not set up to protect the goodies from the baddies, but is a curious and amoral resultant of the struggle for power among all elites.

TONY GIBSON

On the intellectual inhibition of explosive grief and anger

PAUL GOODMAN

FOR THE EXPLOSIVE RELEASE OF STRONG FEELINGS, such as anger and grief, a person must have the object of passion concretely present, even tangibly present in some way. The object of one kind of anger is a present obstacle; grief is for an object present by its felt absence. To blaze with anger and be ready to strike, a person must first be approaching what he desires, he must be actively committed to the approach; and he must believe that the obstacle in his way is the real cause of his frustration. To bawl for loss, he must first have been attached to something, and then he must believe that its absence is the real cause of the misery he feels.

We see that children easily have these beliefs and often flare up and often cry. Faced with even a temporary delay or absence, children pound and scream and bawl; but as soon as the situation changes, they are bafflingly sunny, and take their gratification with relish, or feel secure again when mother returns. It is said that "children cannot wait", but just the contrary is true. It is children who *can* wait, by making dramatic scenes (not otherwise than religious people get through hours of stress by singing hymns). They have a spontaneous mechanism to cushion even minor troubles. Rather it is the adults who have inhibited their spontaneous express, who cannot wait; we swallow our disappointment and always taste what we have swallowed. For where the occasions of passion occur, where there is actual frustration and misery, and yet anger and grief are not explosively released, then the disposition itself is soured, and such happiness as follows is never full and unclouded.

inevitable abuse of intelligence and understanding that keeps them from Especially among intellectual and sensitive persons, there is an the conviction that there is a real, present object of anger and grief; and thus they cannot purge these passions. This is their philosophic or scientific insight that the tangible obstacles or losses are not the "real" ones; for the "real" causes of trouble are seen to be remote, general, intangible; they may be social, technological, even cosmological. Behind the immediate frustration or loss, is the understood cause of it. But the thought of such general or distant causes is not

able to bring on an explosive release in the physical particular person. There is no doubt that such a flight to the abstract—and indeed, most “thinking” altogether—is a neurotic method of avoiding strong feelings, of substituting “knowing about” for awareness, yet it seems to me that this use of intelligence is inevitable, because indeed such insights are true. The dilemma is this: that desire aims at something tangible, at a present change in ourselves and our physical environment; but when desire is thwarted or love lost, the passional feelings that have been physically roused find no tangible object on which to be vented.

The classical solution of this dilemma has been to equalize matters by turning desire itself toward what is theoretical or ideal: “intellectual love”. This has several immensely important variants. One is to achieve stoical *apatheia*, the dissociation of emotion altogether. Another is to achieve Buddhist compassion, the secure response to inevitable misery (in psychoanalysis, this great and constructive frame of mind is a reaction-formation). Neither of these—*apatheia* or compassion—has any relation to animal happiness, so we need not discuss them here. But Intellectual Love can be embarked on also with full risk and, soon enough, somatic commitment; and there then emerge the following interesting possibilities. Suppose intellectual love is frustrated—e.g., by the problem of evil or the problem of infinity—then one comes to a kind of anguish or terror that marks precisely the “return” of the alienated tangible world, perhaps fraught with menace. The particulars of the world will then be regarded not as indifferent to the intellect, but as symbols. A more amiable possibility is that intellectual love is gratified, e.g., by finding proofs of grace and cosmos; then there is said to be a kind of serene ecstasy in which precisely the tangible world is recreated in love; the saint returns to us and performs miracles, the scientist orgasmically achieves this theory, and so forth.

Let us ask, however, what occurs with the intellectual and sensitive person who does not leave behind the tangible objects of desire to devote himself to ideal objects. It is only when the going gets rough, when he meets too much opposition, that he finds that he cannot take the tangible objects seriously, he knows better. Remaining in this mixed realm, can we discover an attitude and an activity that will bring him again to frank bawling and hot wrath?

We are not speaking of those who repress grief and anger altogether—as when a child is made to fear the consequences of his anger and is shamed out of crying, and grows into a smiling insensitive adult. This is the inhibition of appetite itself, and must be treated by character analysis. In this essay I want to speak of a well-defined group: persons who have appetites, who show initiative in approaching and possessing their objects and are therefore subject to frustration and loss, but who cannot give way to anger and grief because they know too much. The character neurotics who repress appetite and passion altogether, before they arise, seem to have been intimidated, for example, by harsh parents. Our sensitive intelligent persons, on the contrary, seem to be anxious about the blind drive itself: when things do not work out, the self is threatened with confusion, and so the intensity of appetite, grief,

anger is controlled and made to *dribble away*, partly in reasoning. The mechanism of dribbling away makes us think of the last-minute inhibition of orgasmic surrender and ejaculation. Perhaps in these cases the ejaculation in masturbation is not much inhibited, but in the contact of love it is inhibited. A safety zone of isolation is necessary. Let us contrast an intelligent child with a less intelligent child forced to repress. If a child is intelligent and intuitive, he can avoid dire consequences so long as he takes care of himself; he learns to keep within his safety zone. Here is he lonely but he is also protected from terrible disappointments and punishments. He feels, too, that if he ventured outside his zone, his anger might become uncontrollable and he might murder somebody. He does not repress but he learns to “know better”.

In this essay my interest is not in interpreting these misfortunes of the past, but in the problem of coping with this tried and proved defence in the present.

2. GRIEF AND WEEPING

The intellectual person feels his deprivation but he does not weep because, as he says, “My feelings are not hurt, *I* am not hurt”. Since he sees that the causes of his loss are objective and general, he knows that they are not aimed especially at him. He is not insulted. (If he were insulted, his ego-protecting anger would flare and this would bring on grief.) Quite the contrary, by his intelligent understanding of causes, he is able to identify himself with the depriving power, he is even somewhat magnified.

Suppose he is in love. So long as pleasure is forthcoming, he cautiously but progressively opens out to it and enjoys his beloved. But as soon as there is threat of loss, he rises above the situation. He at once sees that the loss is inevitable: it is inevitable in the character of the beloved and in his own character, and these cannot be changed; indeed, he might understand that the very increase of their pleasure has created their anxiety, for they have begun to risk confusion, so they withdraw. All this is because of something that happened long ago; it is in the nature of our institutions; it is objective, he himself being one of the objects. It does not touch him at present; he does not feel himself, subjectively, as lost. So he is not softened to bawl.

Nevertheless he feels he is deprived and he is miserable. Being miserable, he characteristically draws back from the feelings of loss and explains it, and he lets his grief dribble away. He is ennobled by understanding. He is now wiser still. The experience was worth it. But he is not purged, and he is henceforth less open to love. He has not mourned enough to be able to live again.

We could say that what is lacking is *surprise*. If he were surprised, he would not have the opportunity to rise above the situation and survey it and let his feeling dribble away. But he is intelligent and foreseeing, not easily surprisable. He is quick to judge by portentous signs and he is always ready. (When such a person becomes more cynical and callous, he even begins to rehearse the outcome before-

hand, the more efficiently to prevent any anxiety—or novelty—from occurring.)

Of course he is perfectly right. His lost love is not for him a real object of grief, for, protecting himself, he did not spontaneously engage himself, but only deliberately and cautiously. It is certainly his own character that is the real object at least of anger, for it is a frustrating obstacle to him. If he could feel this, he would weep in pity for himself hemmed in by his character. But it is just one's own character that one does not feel. It is the character of an intelligent sensitive person to understand itself in principle, but not to feel engaged in the struggle between happiness and character, and break down. As an object of observation, a man's character is no surprise to him; he has long known its ways. Does he ask himself the question, "Have I been happy for thirty-forty-fifty years?"

Nevertheless, it is not the case that an intelligent sensitive man who cannot weep for his misery cannot weep at all. We find, to our surprise, that he weeps in two interesting situations, and these give us useful clues how to help him.

First, he weeps when he attends to something of pure and simple beauty that suddenly surprises him. It may be a phrase of melody or words, a flower, a graceful or noble gesture or behaviour. Such things, when they occur surprisingly, bring tears to his eyes, and he may even softly weep. The sequence is as follows: because the object is beautiful, promissory of pleasure and giving pleasure, he allows it to come close to himself and then, at the surprising turn to something still simpler and more resolving, he has had neither the time nor the inclination to guard against it; he *is* surprised and touched. Feeling rises, and the feeling that rises—unexpectedly—weeping. Why is this?

Such beauties are the signs of paradise; experiencing them is an activity of paradise. But paradise is lost. So the tears are, after all, tears not of joy but of loss. It is his own hurt self that he is weeping for, because now, in these special circumstances, *his persistent misery is confronted with an actual loss that he believes in*. On reflection, we can understand why it is precisely an object of beauty that can get behind, or under, the habitual defences of intelligence. The experience of beauty is preconceptual; it moves between sensory presentness and a meaning coming into being, not yet rigidly defined. Experience of beauty is prior to the separation that a man makes between his present pleasure—which is meaningless, because he does not fully give himself to it—and his general conception of what would "really" satisfy him, which he does not believe, because it is merely a thought. But the tangible present object stands, as part for whole, for a tangible lost object, and he weeps. But it is only an object of beauty, whose meaning he again gathers and interprets, and his soft weeping dries before it deepens to orgastic sobbing.

It is not by accident that the intelligent sensitive person often turns out to be an artist, to create this experience that is alone meaningful to him.

The social situation that brings our man to tears is still more

curious; it is relenting, the relaxation of unnecessary torture. Note that, again, it is precisely not a deprivation but a kind of gift that is the prelude to weeping. Thus, suppose a judge sympathizes with a condemned man and says he is sorry. He holds out his relenting hand to shake yours, perhaps remarking that justice is not perfect. He expresses his relenting in order to save your feelings, not, of course, to suspend the sentence. And so, because your feelings *are* saved, you take that reptilian hand and choke up. One's intellectual defences were strongly marshalled against the oppressor, but how the tension is relaxed. The tears are for oneself, but not because the self has been saved but because, in so far saved, it can afford to feel what it has lost. The relenting is a sign that the oppression, with which one identified in part simply by standing trial, has not after all been inevitable; one *could have been happy*, but it is lost. In this soft mood one then accedes to the present unhappiness. Naturally one does not frankly bawl for it, but chokes back the crying and dries the eyes.

Tragic poets relent and win the audience's tears at just the worst moment, as when Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts* suddenly recognizes that her husband had perhaps had a hard time of it himself, and was somewhat justified. In tragedies, the pity is for the protagonist as he approaches his catastrophe; the fear is for him and oneself at the catastrophe; but the tears are for oneself when, after the catastrophe, there is a relenting of the judgment. The poet sympathizes—I quote from Genet's *Les Pompes Funèbres*—"T'as été malheureux, hein?" *T'as été malheureux, hein?*

That is, identifying with the depriving and condemning causes that now relent, our man allows himself a certain self-pity. This is already a great step, for especially the intelligent sensitive man is likely to be harsh and implacable toward himself, to make the highest demands on himself. Often, because he understands, he is kindly to others and makes no demands on them. For others he is kindly and he feels sorry, but he does not love them; himself he loves, but he is not kindly to himself. He knows enough to regard his hurt self as a small insignificant object; he has grown beyond identifying with himself, he understands the causes. But in the special case of relenting, he can pity his small self.

Nevertheless, the small self is not the whole self. The one who is pitying is not himself suffering a present loss.

So we see that our man weeps—and therefore provides us with clues—for beauty and the remnants of self-security. Both are present gifts that revive the memory of old losses, but it is only present losing that one can frankly bawl for.

3. SOLUTION

The intellectual sensitive man does not presently lose because he does not presently stake himself. Our clues makes us see that two things are necessary for frank bawling. First, instead of looking for reminders of paradise, which lead to weeping softly, *he must engage*

in the present hope and effort for paradise. In such a pursuit he cannot passively identify with the existing causes of things, for paradise does not exist. So, second, he must identify with paradise by actively *making* the causes of his reality. Then, instead of relenting pity for himself, which leads to choking up, he will be vulnerable to present tangible loss. For in the pursuit and creation of paradise, a man is surprisingly confronted with obstacles and present loss, and he is angry and bawls.

Usually, a man plays it safe by engaging only in what he knows he is more than adequate to. For an intelligent man this is not a small area, and he can respectably exist in it a long time. But if he wants to be surprisingly miserable, he need only raise the stakes, move where it is no longer safe for him, and aim at what he might or might not be adequate to. Precisely because one is able to cope with what is usual, one must therefore hunger also for paradise. Such an aim cannot be evaluated by a psychologist, for he is a man in the same situation and knows no more about it than his patient. We may now define "paradise" relative to the working of intelligence adequate to the usual. Paradise is practical activity among improbabilities, it is what is "foolishly hoped for". Engaged there in a struggle for life—for such activity is not safe—a man will have plenty of occasion for explosive passion.

Let us pause a moment and consider the usual existing condition of our intellectual sensitive man. He is likely tired, and he is too intelligent to hope and try foolishly. Assume that he has made an adequate adjustment in personal and social life; even his painful reactions are not unbearable; his personality does not break down. This is probable if he is intelligent and sensitive, can learn the maze, and intuitively when to let his strong feelings dribble away. (An insensitive man runs more risk of breaking down.) He sees that the life that is practical is not paradisaical. He feels the persistent misery involved in the loss of paradise, but he does not confront this as his present loss, because he is not turned to it practically. Where he happens to be practically engaged, he is not unsuccessful; he is perhaps more than adequate to such problems as arise; and just understanding his own and the world's troubles is a steady comfort. As the *New York Times* explained in a recent advertisement for itself, "You'll be delighted at the satisfaction you get every morning by knowing what's going on in the world". And what is the use of arguing? One protested enough as a child. The man employs his intelligence to protect himself from his misery, and this is as it should be. He uses his intelligence to calculate what is feasible and to understand what is lost. For intelligence has these two functions: to help complete unfinished situations by solving problems and coming to practical responses; or, where problems are insoluble, to circle and dissipate energy in fantasy and idea.

Why would such a man want to be surprisingly miserable? He is tired, miserable but not dissatisfied, enjoying the satisfactions of the usual standards. Why should he wilfully encourage the hunger that will recreate his, and our, misery, when we have "gotten over" our misery,

and things are well enough? In brief, what is his symptom?

He is unused and bored. Being intellectual and sensitive, he has grown to a considerable size and, unawares, continues to grow, but his pattern of "adequate" activity does not realize his powers, and this restiveness is interpreted by him as boredom.

Let us distinguish acute and chronic boredom. In general, boredom is fixing the present attention on what cannot be interesting because eros is attached to something outside of attention. In acute boredom, the unconscious attraction is definite, claims attention, and must be actively repressed—e.g., being somewhere and really wishing to be elsewhere. But habitual or chronic boredom is boredom with the pattern of activity as a whole, with oneself. It is being adequate where in fact one is more than adequate; failing to exercise powers, because they are dangerous or destructive; failing to hunger after impossibilities, because one will be disappointed; failing to deepen misery, until one is surprisingly miserable.

It is not with impunity that one exists with impunity.

In boredom one senses a constraining force that fixes the attention on what cannot be interesting enough. In acute boredom this is some present duty, for instance, that could, with more courage, be abrogated; it is often the reactive opposite of a guilty attraction actively repressed. The condition is therefore one of lively pain. But chronic boredom is spiritless. The constraint is both peculiarly relentless and peculiarly anonymous. There is nothing to oppose and it is omnipresent.

It is the self that must relent. The self, its theory and picture of itself and its habitual reasonableness, is the chief constraining force. As we say, "It takes two people to make a bore", and oneself is always one of them. Typical standards of the relentless self are: the need to be always right; to be consistent; unwillingness to be a fool; satisfaction with the situation as it is when it is well enough. The bother is that these standards are irrefutable. Our rationalizations are usually true.

So long as paradise is regarded as "lost" or again as "not yet", we are not able to cry, for our losing is not tangibly present. In the present it is not possible to know the laws of paradise, but only to make them.

4. ANGER

Let us treat the men and women well, treat them as if they were real—perhaps they are.

—EMERSON

We may sketch more briefly the plight of the intellectual sensitive person who cannot give way to anger and strike a blow. His case is more familiar.

Self-pity and utopianism are disesteemed among us—they are, for instance, damning criticisms of novels and poetry; but the capacity for wrath and indignation is valued precisely among intellectuals; it is considered strong, manly, and serious; its lack is strongly felt.

But what to be angry with, and where to strike? Every man feels

frustrated; a man is, for instance, frustrated by poverty that uses his time and hampers his enterprise; but the intelligent man understands that the obstacle is not really the employer or non-employer in front of him, but it is the economic institutions. Sexually frustrated, he realizes that the obstacle is not his tangible partner but the moral code, religion, upbringing, working in himself and his partner. How to strike at these? They are not things.

An expedient that used to be much recommended was to identify oneself with a group or movement dedicated to striking at the real obstacles; because of its size and power, the group is more commensurate with the vast obstacles. This is perhaps a practical mode of action but I doubt that it solves our dilemma. Instead of bringing oneself into the tangible presence of the frustrating obstacles, it confronts one with symbols or agents of the obstacles, e.g., the policeman or the school board; and if one is sensitive, his feeling toward these mere agents cannot be anger. But suppose that a man hardens his sensitivity and learns to feel and act as if these symbols and agents were his tangible enemies; then he even rather easily works himself into habitual wrath, a condition that we used to observe in many Communists, when there were Communists around. But it is not *oneself* that is wrathful, so the discharge is not deep-going. Rather, one strikes at an agent, using oneself as an agent. One is not angry, but has worked oneself into the role of being angry.

Let us again seek for clues in the opposite direction, in situations that are not particularly frustrating in any way but make our man flare up. First, let me mention a curious reaction that I should not believe if I had not observed it in myself and others. Someone is displaying, perhaps in a parlour conversation, a bumptious overbearing stupidity. Suddenly, quite beyond any expectation of his own behaviour, the intelligent man strikes the stupid one in the face. He was not being immediately frustrated at all, but it is as if his frustration of all the hope of the world has arisen and caught him by the throat. If *this* object exists, he feels himself frustrated of everything, of paradise, of any possibility of making sense. The stupidity before him makes him feel that he is in a morass; his nausea rises; he blindly strikes. But of course the blow is itself senseless and the next moment he is apologetic and tries to make amends. The blow has no direction—"I didn't mean *you*"; it is blind, has no relation to one's practical concern—"I don't know what got into *me*".

A second occasion for flaring up is extremely familiar to myself. The intelligent man is earnestly giving his best opinion or advice, without trying to persuade, for he is disinterested in the affair and is just trying to be helpful; but the other smiles smugly and says, "Hm". The intelligent man then flares in anger and shouts, "Who do you think you are!" His affect is strong, but he does not strike. The affect is strong because his best "whole" self has been actively committed to its best activity, of earnest intelligent opinion. So committed, he ventures outside his safety zone toward a tangible contact. But he has been

betrayed, not so much by the other's indifference as by his own engagement.

Let us look more deeply at this same occasion and mention a usual sequence of which it is a part. The intellectual sensitive man makes a sexual advance and is rebuffed; but he does not yet feel the anger of frustration, for he understands that it is in the nature of things, etc. Instead, he is merely sad. Retreating to the security of his own best strength, he then begins to offer good general advice, friendly, but tinged with an hostility unknown to himself. The other, noticing the hostility, withdraws into indifference. Now I flare in anger. For it is just acting among generalities that, having given up the tangible, I am really trying to appropriate the world. I was not committed to the tangible sexual advance, but to the good advice I am deeply committed. Now I am really frustrated. My anger is strong, but I cannot discharge it by striking the tangible person before me—for I *am* disinterested, I have not been trying to persuade.

Just as he is always on the brink of tears, so our intellectual sensitive man is always on the verge of anger. He is angry with himself, with precisely his intelligence and its abuse in generalities, rather than its achieving tangible goods. The stupidity that enrages him is his own stupidity, for he is shrewd everywhere but in getting what he wants. There he is disarmed and stupid. He is angry with the world because it does not allow his earnest intellectual concern to become concrete in tangible effects; and he is angry with himself because his tangible desires do not really enlist his intellectual concern.

What he lacks is patience. Just as he is chronically bored because unused, so he is chronically impatient because greedy. This is why his aggressive initiative does not meet with a tangible object.

Impatience in general is desire without its object, going forward with desire to meet an object that is not tangible through properties of time, appropriateness, availability. Let us distinguish acute and chronic impatience. Acute impatience is the interruption or delay of a particular desire that is already on its way. But chronic impatience desires to desire, it abstractly anticipates its object, it exhausts itself in an idea, whereas desire would normally rise in the actual or imminent presence of its object. Inevitably the premature desire of chronic impatience is a cause of present frustration, for it takes the object not as it is but as it imagined—and also as it is feared, for to fail, except within one's own narrow conditions, is an important purpose of chronic impatience. The frustrated intelligent man is especially prone to anticipate in this way. He gathers his unfinished desires in one perfect bundle of satisfaction that he desires, and the coming object must, somehow, be such as to fulfil all this recipe. He makes a demand on it according to his preconception. And meantime *he disregards the new possibilities in the actual object*. The presence of the object is necessarily disappointing to him; it is unworthy to enlist his intellectual concern. Also, the way he takes it does not fit it, so he acts, with regard to it, like a fool.

Chronically impatient, the intellectual sensitive man does not regard

what is present as possibly interesting as it is, and as it is available; thus he is chronically bored.

5. SOLUTION

But supposing he waits patiently for the object before him to rouse his desire: and patiently uses his best intelligence on it as a possible object and exercises his best discrimination and other powers. Then, as the world goes, he will usually find himself really frustrated anyway, and, without reproaching himself for his stupidity, he will have occasion to flame with anger.

For let us bring together our two prescriptions: (1) to cease longing for lost paradise and make a present effort for paradise; and (2) to cease aggressively anticipating the paradise not yet, but to wait patiently for felt desire. These are the present: the present effort, the felt desire. It is necessary for a person to have a sphere in which he can, actually, in the present, exercise his best powers. This he will not easily find. In the kinds of occasions that generally offer, he will have plenty of tangible objects that are the real causes of his grief and anger.

We have thus characterized the intellectual sensitive person nowadays as letting his passions dribble away; his grief dribbles away in consoling explanations; his anger dribbles away in impatient approaches. He is always sad and on the verge of anger. He is chronically bored and chronically impatient; unrelenting toward himself; stupid with regard to the others. If he would relent and pity himself, he would bring himself near to tears; and if he would then aim at a condition worthy of a man, he would come to orgasmic sobbing. If he would be patient and let his concern rise in the presence of desirable objects, he would use his intelligence incisively and objectively, and would soon flame with anger and—probably not strike—but *shake* the object in rage.

But he lets his feelings dribble away in order to avoid the excitement of explosive release that is too strong for him to bear. It is to avoid a terrible darkness, whether black or red, that he becomes wary and characteristically intellectual and sensitive. The available world being what it is—for he is not, for the most part, in error—he marshals his energy against these mounting excitements, and therefore in the present he is tired, impatient, bored.

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